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ABSTRACT

A study of approximately 16 gifted third through sixth grade students was undertaken to describe the learning behavior of the group as they interacted with teachers and students. Observations of the students and interviews with teachers were used to obtain the data. Seventeen ethnographic recordings are included in the report. Among the 10 conclusions resulting from the study were that gifted students tended to be isolated from many regular classroom activities, that gifted students seldom volunteered or were asked to assist others, that gifted students do not choose other gifted students as their closest friends in the school setting, and that gifted students do not attempt to monopolize the time of the teacher and seem resigned to their role of being rather isolated from many activities. (PHR)

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GIFTED PUPILS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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GIFTED PUPILS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

Introduction

Since Terman's studies[1] in the 1920s, interest or neglect of gifted pupils has alternated almost as regularly as the tides, always capable of generating disagreement and sometimes conflict among educators responsible for establishing policy guidelines. The short-range economic effects of the question (what the program will cost) often take precedence over the long-range economic consequences (the possible contribution of gifted persons to the G.N.P., and its multiplier effect). Almost never will the pure educational requirements of gifted pupils be the major factor in determining the program available to such students. While the economic projections suggested need research effort, the present study sought to shed light on the later question. That question may be best stated for the purposes of this study in the following manner, "How do gifted pupils fare in the elementary school setting? How do such pupils interact and react in the regular school setting with regular pupils and teachers and how do these same pupils interact with other pupils and special teachers in classes for the gifted?"

Objectives

The major objective of this research was to describe the teaching-learning behaviors of gifted elementary pupils as they interact with the

special teacher, the regular classroom teacher, other gifted pupils and their regular classmates in the total context of the school day. From these descriptive data, generalized statements emerge accounting for teaching-learning successes or failures of elementary gifted pupils.

Perspective

A specific theoretical framework was deliberately avoided prior to or during the data collection. It was impossible, however, to avoid certain prior biases that stimulated interest in the research. These were as follows:

1. Due to their high intellectual ability, gifted pupils are often intellectually beyond the level and specific materials being taught in regular classrooms; therefore they are often bored with regular classroom activity and/or pose problems for regular classroom teachers and pupils.
2. Regular teachers and/or pupils sometimes resent gifted pupils and the special resources provided.
3. Gifted pupils do not interact well or frequently with their less gifted classmates in regular classrooms.
4. Gifted pupils often are assigned more "seat work" to occupy their time while regular teachers interact with the rest of the class.
5. Gifted pupils look forward to their special classes but sometimes feel penalized by their regular teachers for attending these classes.
6. The greatest stimulation of gifted pupils occurs during situations that are challenging and creative, and activities that require thinking at higher levels.

7. Gifted pupils may have difficulty communicating with their less gifted classmates and choose other gifted pupils as friends or simply do without friends.

These statements served as guides to early ethnographic data collection and as a basis for the ongoing analysis which takes place during the ethnographic field experience. Specific incidents of deviant case data were sought during data collection in addition to those data that supported the statements.

After data collection was completed, a review of current literature was undertaken and a framework developed enabling explanation of the data and the statements as revised by the data. A brief review of that literature follows.

Selected Literature Review

In 1972, the Office of Gifted and Talented was established within the U.S. Office of Education. In order to identify these children, the Office formulated a working definition of the gifted and talented: children capable of high performance, including those with demonstrated achievement or ability in any one or more of these areas--general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, or psychomotor ability.[2]

The gifted do not, as individuals, embrace identical sets of behaviors, nor do the mental, physical, social and emotional aspects of their development necessarily progress at the same pace (Gordon, 1971).[3] Thus, giftedness must be viewed as a much broader concept than solely high intelligence.

Consequently, a wider variety of identification procedures have been developed.[4]

From the first day a child enters elementary school he is bombarded with social forces which tend to encourage modification of his behavior toward that which is the mean of the group. Modification is not limited to social behavior but is also observable in creative and intellectual behavior. For gifted children, modification toward the mean represents regression.[5] Schools are often described as pressure chambers for conformity with teachers lacking the sensitivity for the original and novel performance of gifted students. There are too many requirements, coupled with a reward system that inhibits novelty and originality.[6]

Being gifted is often as much a handicap in our schools as being retarded. Gifted children need special programs to realize their potential. They need challenging learning activities, understanding teachers, and highly individualized learning opportunities. Without special assistance such children often conceal their talents, become bored, show hostile behavior, or withdraw from others.[7]

Standard classroom programs and requirements frequently frustrate gifted children. Often the self images of these children suffer, and their talents may be lost if their natural inquisitiveness and curiousity are stifled. The needs of gifted and talented children may be the same as those of children of average ability, but they differ in degree and quality.[8] Gifted students are not only interested in different kinds of topics than the average student, but more important, their styles of learning tend to be different. They are more apt to work independently; they want

intellectually open-ended studies; they react negatively against highly structured, carefully sequenced curricula; and they want to explore and deal with the theoretical and abstract.[9]

Proposed Consequences of Hetrogeneous Grouping

Standard classrooms seem to be ill-equipped to deal with future Beethovens, Jeffersons, Newtons, and Einsteins. Gifted children often appear different, out-of-the-ordinary, and out-of-step with the rest of the class. They are often misunderstood, considered uncooperative, antisocial, or defiant.[10] Public schools are designed for the normal or average child and aim to provide a homogeneous (equal) education for all children. In essence, public education is education for conformity.[11]

If the gifted are fortunate enough to have anything special done for them, they are likely to be forced down the purely cognitive track. The danger is that they will then join the ranks of "one-dimensional half-men."[12] Defense mechanisms frequently used by gifted students who have feelings of not belonging or not being wanted include tiredness, non-attention, chronic boredom, a tendency to daydream, and truancy.[13]

Teachers who have gifted learners in their classes are not necessarily positive about these pupils. Teachers may tend to reflect the more general attitude that gifted should "adjust" learning to hide their abilities so they will be acceptable.[14] Teachers can and have contributed to the failure of the gifted pupil. Too often teachers assigned to work with the gifted require them to do the regular education curriculum somewhat faster and more of its tedium. Teachers sometimes feel threatened by the gifted

child because she/he is apt to be extremely perceptive and outspokenly critical. This is certainly not to say that all teachers do poorly with gifted students. Some teachers do an excellent job; but many others do not, to the detriment of the gifted.[15]

Gifted pupils report that school subjects are interesting but often not intellectually challenging. Most pupils felt that school subjects were generally relevant but not helpful in solving personal problems, and that acquiring an education was of great importance to their future. They strongly favored homogeneous grouping, indicating that it was fair, helpful to the gifted, and should be continued. They perceived that teachers encouraged independence in learning by allowing individual study and self-pacing, stimulating students to think, and assisting only on request. They felt teachers discourage independence by requiring the same work of all students and criticizing creative thinking. Most said they would elect to study independently if given the choice.[16] They dislike the pressures of normal classroom tasks such as getting assignments in on time, taking tests, and having to complete work in a very restricted environment, i.e., an environment with inflexible time allocations, prescribed textbooks and other resources, and limited choices in the ways in which they go about carrying out their work.[17]

Finally the literature is in general agreement about certain attitudes of the gifted that could be expected to influence their behavior in the school setting. There seems to be considerable evidence that children who are mentally gifted are also superior in physical development. They are generally taller, heavier, and stronger than average children of the

same age.[18] On the other hand mentally gifted children may be more inclined to have emotional problems perhaps due to the fact that "the more actively a child reaches out to his environment, the more conflict he/she is likely to encounter.[19] The fact is that the gifted and talented youngster tends to see himself as standing out not as a beacon but as a sore thumb. Being "different" often becomes a heavy burden, and many of these young people find themselves unable to deal with it.[20] Underachievement patterns of bright children often spring from emotional conditions, which themselves at times result from protest against the quality and/or quantity of motivation employed by significant adults in their environs.[21]

This literature review, which included a search of 45 education, curriculum and special education journals and dissertation abstracts between 1970-1978, tended to reaffirm and make more explicit the original assumptions used to guide this research. As Prehm noted it is surprising that special education research has been focused on essentially the same topics during its entire history. It has seemed to revolve primarily around the development of more efficient and more effective methods for identifying and evaluating exceptional children, the characteristics of exceptional children, the development of teaching materials and techniques, and the evaluation of alternate educational service delivery systems.[22] The focus of the research is outside that general trend, being concerned totally with describing the observed activities, interactions and sentiments of gifted pupils in an elementary school. Given these data we propose to refine the initial assumptions generally supported in the research of the 1970s and propose testable hypotheses for future research concerning elementary school programs for the gifted.

Methods and Data Source

From January 1979 through the end of May 1979, ethnographic observations of gifted pupils in a selected elementary school were made. A total of twenty observations of each of three groups of gifted children in 1 1/4-hour enrichment classes was made. The groups were composed of (1) 8-9 pupils from 5-6 grades, (2) 4 pupils from 4th grade, (3) 4 pupils from 3d grade. Additionally, these students were observed in their regular classroom as they proceeded through their regular school activities. These activities included, in addition to the regular classroom activities, such things as recess, physical education, speech classes, instrumental music and lunch. There were six regular teachers (classes) to which gifted pupils had been regularly assigned. Each of these classrooms was observed during two complete school days from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Teachers were informally interviewed at least twice in addition to these observations, and the enrichment teacher was informally interviewed after the end of each day of observation. Two independent observers observed each enrichment class three times. Their independent field notes were compared with the field notes of the principal ethnographer.

These data were then used to write an ethnography of "Gifted Pupils in the Elementary School Setting." This ethnography was analyzed using the original tentative statements and the theoretical framework as described above.

Data

One of the major outputs of this research is approximately 100 pages of ethnographic type descriptions of the gifted pupils in an elementary school. Obviously this account cannot be reproduced here. Instead each

original assumption will be presented and "typical" behaviors observed and related to the assumption will be offered. In the conclusion section those assumptions will be reformulated as the data confirmed or modified the statement.

In the following incidences, proper names are used only when a gifted pupil is being described.

Statement #1 - Gifted pupils are often bored with regular classroom activities and/or pose problems for regular classroom teachers and pupils, and Statement #4 - Gifted pupils are often assigned more "seat work" to occupy their time while regular classroom teachers interact with the rest of the class.

Incident #1

During the viewing of an educational T.V. program in a fourth grade, Ann and Gene (both gifted pupils) were part of the regular classroom group. Gene watched without much enthusiasm, dreaming out the window occasionally. Ann divided her attention between the program and observing Ms. Happy who was putting work on the chalkboard for the next lesson. While attentive to the program, she was very interested in what Ms. Happy was doing. George on the other hand was not very attentive to the program or Ms. Happy. On the average, other pupils were more attentive, but not intense, about viewing the program. When the program was over, neither Gene nor Ann participated in the discussion at first. Later Ann volunteered, was called upon, and gave a fairly complicated statement about the meaning of the program. George generally was unconcerned about the discussion.

Incident #2

Returning from recess, the fourth grade class got their chairs and formed a circle near the chalkboard. Gene and Ann remained at their desks along with one other girl. The other girl was called to the circle by Ms. Happy, leaving Ann and Gene the only ones not in the circle. The class participated in math activities with alternating sets of two pupils working assigned problems at the board while the others worked the problems at their clusters in the circle. Gene and Ann were working other (more advanced) math problems from the same book at their regular seats.

Ann worked diligently and continuously from problem to problem, page to page, with only an occasional glance at Ms. Happy. Gene worked some problems, looked at the circle group for two or three minutes at a time, and then dreamed out the window for longer periods. At one point, while Gene was staring out the window, he brushed his book from his desk. Ms. Happy asked, "Gene are you working? Are you stuck or something?" Gene responded, "No!," and went back to work.

After a few minutes Gene stopped and talked to Bob (his close classroom friend) who was in the circle but sitting close to Gene. At this time (after 40 minutes of work) Ms. Happy asked Gene and Ann to join the circle. The group was then divided into two groups with Ann in one and Gene in the other. Ms Happy then conducted a "Math-Bee," pupil against pupil, attempting to solve math problems. She was careful to put Gene and Ann against one another. When their turn came, the other pupils cried out, "Give them a hard one," and "Make it hard." All seemed to enjoy seeing the two gifted pupils compete against one another.

Incident #3

Russell and Monica were in Ms. Macklin's fourth grade class. Ms. Macklin had just finished collecting lunch and milk money and taking attendance. At 9:15, a math lesson was begun. First Ms. Macklin worked sample problems for the class. Then groups of pupils were called to the board (by rows), five to seven pupils at a time, to work assigned problems. Both Monica and Russell participated with the rest of the class but not in the same "board" group. It took 20 minutes to get everyone to the board. Both Russell and Monica got their problems correct and were the first ones in their respective groups to do so. While at their seats, both worked the problems of other groups, while in general other pupils did not. Both Russell and Monica were vocal about the work of others at the board. Russell was more critical than Monica.

During the rest of the day, Russell and Monica participated in all activities with the regular class (except for a 75-minute enrichment period). The classroom activities included a science test, a spelling lesson, physical education class, recess, lunch and a group social activity of planning for a class valentine party. Both Monica and Russell were chairpersons of different committees. That activity had been scheduled around enrichment so both could participate. Both were acceptant of the ideas of others in the committees, but they did act as chairpersons and "ran" the meetings.

Incident #4

Mrs. Dance was a former junior high physical education teacher who decided to go back to school and become certified as an elementary teacher. She was teaching a sixth grade and in her first year as a classroom teacher.

In spite of lack of experience, she had a student teacher working with her. The student teacher had just completed a spelling lesson when the observation began. The student teacher was very time oriented and started and stopped her lessons within a minute of the time prescribed on her lesson plan. Mrs. Dance occasionally had problems maintaining a reasonable teaching-learning atmosphere in the classroom and this bothered the student teacher as she tried to conduct the lesson. In this particular lesson, the class was divided into groups. Some were working on arithmetic homework while others went to a bulletin board to play a fraction bingo game. The student teacher had gone to great effort to prepare various kinds of visual materials in order to teach fractions. The notion of the game was that the student solved the problem pinned on the bulletin board, found the answer on his/her bingo cards and then continued around the bulletin board until he/she completed the particular set of assignments that had been integrated into this game. There were three gifted pupils in this class: Don, Joe, and Kate. Joe had had a problem over time in completing work in the regular classroom and in the enrichment class. He tended to do his work sloppily and often lost it before he had a chance to turn it in, even when he had completed it.

As the one group was going around the bulletin board game, others were working at their seats. Joe was not working and Mrs. Dance reprimanded him for dreaming and not working. Don was at one of the tasks at the bulletin board. When he solved the problem, he failed to replace the parts of the problems for the next group to work on. He returned to his seat and instead of working on math, he began to write some sort of a sarcastic

note to the teacher which began, "Oh mighty one. . . ." The note requested that the teacher move his seat to the back of the room. When he showed her the note, Mrs. Dance simply laughed and said, "Well I don't know," and asked him to return to his seat.

Jake left his seat and went up and just talked to the student teacher. The math assignment was not done and when he went back to his desk, he didn't get at his math homework which the rest of class was doing. He simply stated, "I'll do my homework at home. That's where one is supposed to homework anyway." By this time, about ten minutes after the group had started homework, Kate had been working diligently on her homework and had finished it. She just daydreamed at her seat without doing much of anything. Joe was still just dreaming at his seat and Don was beginning another note for Mrs. Dance.

As the groups proceeded through the fraction bingo game, all three of the gifted pupils completed their bingo cards very quickly and then they stood around the room either talking with one another while they waited for the rest of the class to finish. Finally, many of the others had finished with their tasks, but some were still unable to complete it. The student teacher was urging them to hurry. Some of the pupils were complaining that the teacher ought to go slower. By this time, about two-thirds of the class was becoming very impatient.

Don was still working on his note to Mrs. Dance. As he finished it he went to another boy in the class, a student who was not part of the gifted group, and got him to sign the note. They both took it to deliver it to Mrs. Dance. By this time, forty-five minutes had elapsed which was

the assigned amount of time for the arithmetic lesson. Within the minute the student teacher stopped this activity and directed the class to begin another. The three gifted pupils had done approximately twelve minutes' work during the entire forty-five minute session.

Statement #2 - Regular teachers and/or pupils sometimes resent gifted pupils and the special resources provided for them.

Incident #5

Toward the end of a math lesson, Miss Brooks, put an assignment on the board that the class was to do in the next twenty minutes, prior to lunch time. She then said to the group of gifted people in her class it was time for them to go to the enrichment class. She said that inasmuch as they would not be able to do this work at that time, they were to return to the classroom after finishing their lunch and complete the work during the lunch recess time. The children did not complain, merely put their books away and left for the enrichment room. They returned during lunch recess to complete the assignment.

Incident #6

Mr. and Mrs. Jones were in conference with the enrichment teacher where the I.E.P., individually prescribed program was being discussed. Mary, their daughter, had recently been identified as gifted and was about to enter the gifted program. The law required that an I.E.P. conference be held, that the parents be consulted about the objectives in the I.E.P., and that they consent for the child to participate in the program. As the conference ended, Mrs. Lots asked Mr. and Mrs. Jones if they had any questions about the program. Mrs. Jones replied, "Yes, I have one problem.

Mary tells me that Miss Brooks often gets upset because the pupils in enrichment have to miss work in her room. She very often makes comments about this that make children feel upset and puts a lot of pressure on the students." Mrs. Lots hesitated for a moment and then said, "I don't think that will be any problem this year. We have worked out the schedule so that most of the time, enrichment comes during periods of the day when more important activities in the classroom are already finished. Miss Brooks has approved our schedule and I haven't heard that there has been any problems this year." Mrs. Jones indicated that this reassured her but she hoped everyone would be careful so Mary wouldn't feel any additional pressure from Miss Brooks because she was in the enrichment program.

Incident #7

Mrs. Dance had just completed a social studies lesson and had asked the class to do some work in that area by writing a paragraph at their desks. As the class got to work, Mrs. Dance walked over to the observer. "You know it is difficult for me," she said, "because the children are out of class so much. We have music and speech and special reading classes and many times the children who need the work most are the ones who are not here." She made no special reference at this time to enrichment class or to the gifted children but she complained about other activities that took pupils out of her classroom.

Incident #8

Following a reading assignment, Mrs. Happy asked the class to write a paragraph covering some specific areas outlined on the board. She told them that the enrichment pupils had to leave, but that they were to return during the recess period to finish the assignment because, "we have to get

this done today; I'm sorry." The two enrichment children left and during the recess break that interrupted the enrichment period they returned and completed the paragraph, taking about 12 of the 20-minute recess period to do so. Following the recess period, they then returned to the enrichment class. They did not complain to the enrichment teacher about missing their recess.

Incident #9

Ms. Riddle came to Ms. Lots at the teachers' table in the lunchroom. She complained that Jack (who had recently been processed into the enrichment class) was not doing his regular classroom work and was acting "smart" in class. Ms. Riddle suggested that Jack be temporarily removed from enrichment as a punishment. "I'm sorry," Ms. Lots replied, but that's against the law. He's been due processed in and I'm obligated to provide him the service. I will talk to him, however." (Note: Jack has an IQ of 140 but also has a perceptual difficulty and has been diagnosed as hyperactive.)

Statement #3 - Gifted pupils do not interact well or frequently with their less gifted classmates in regular classrooms.

Statement #7 - Gifted pupils may have difficulty communicating with their less gifted classmates and choose other gifted pupils as friends or simply do without friends. [In the excerpts from the ethnography used below, all proper names refer to gifted pupils. The symbol NGP (non-gifted pupil) will be substituted for the name of any other pupil. Thus, the statements can be examined. Further, the symbol ♀ (female) and ♂ (male) will be used as a further aid to examination of the statements.]

Incident #10

Joe was the only pupil in the enrichment room. All other gifted pupils in the group were working in the adjacent library. Joe complained aloud that he couldn't find a pencil and then located one on the table and began to work on a challenging math problem. He talked to himself about the problem and attracted the attention of Ms. Lots who helped him. Later, the other gifted pupils returned from the library to get additional tasks to work on. Several of them worked together and frequently assisted others who were having difficulty. Joe continued to work alone, now sitting on the floor. He got up and came over to where Ms. Lots was helping Quintin, and told her he had finished his problem. She stopped, looked at Joe's solution and said, "Very good. Go check it off!" Joe returned to his place on the floor. (In all observations, the researcher almost never heard other pupils, gifted or other, refer to Joe except by his last name.)

Incident #11

Joe was dreaming around the enrichment room while the other gifted pupils were at work. Ms. Lots asked, "Joe, don't you have something due me - or are you reading another book?" Joe claimed that he had already turned in the required work. Ms. Lots contradicted him. However, she did not go to his table to check with him. Joe fumbled through his notebook which was a shamble of papers stuffed in every direction. Ms. Lots walked to where Joe was sitting and helped him. She showed him what he needed to do to produce the work saying, "I want to be presented with pages six and seven before you leave today." Joe grumbled and protested that the work had been turned in but he had not put them in his notebook. Ms. Lots got Joe

to start putting his work in order and left him to finish. Joe continued to sort through the disorder of papers in the notebook making some better order. She then helped two other pupils and returned to check with Joe who had found the work. "Now get your 'Productive Thinking' problems in order," she said and left to help another. As the bell rang, five minutes later, Joe started to leave as Ms. Lots found another of Joe's misplaced papers and required him to put it in his notebook. He did so and left. "He's mad as a hornet," said Ms. Lots.

Incident #12

Quintin was sitting in the coat area before the morning bell rang. He was bouncing a basketball. The room was very noisy. Ms. Dance screamed, "Knock it off and sit down!" Some pupils went to their seats as an NGP ♀ threw a book at another NGP ♂ . "All right," shouted Ms. Dance. Quintin was sitting at his desk talking to an NGP ♂ who was sitting on Quintin's desk. He and the NGP ♂ went to the pencil sharpener and stopped to talk to two NGPs ♀ . Quintin left that group and talked with animation to another NGP ♀ . Ms. Dance got some order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

This scene could be repeated many times except there was more order in most classrooms. Most of the time, particularly in grades below sixth, gifted boys and girls interacted with NGP pupils of their own sex. Almost never did they seek out a gifted classmate to interact with except in the enrichment activity. Almost always their companions were pupils of the same sex, bright but not quite bright enough to be in the gifted group. Many of these companions had been evaluated for enrichment but had not made it. Never was a gifted pupil observed freely interacting with less than an above average pupil either in the regular classroom, on the playground

or at other activities. Very infrequently, at the request of the classroom teacher, they assisted another pupil in the regular classroom. This differed from the enrichment class where they frequently volunteered to assist one another as the following incident describes.

Incident #13

The fifth-sixth grade group was in the enrichment room. All were very busy. Don needed some science equipment and Joe stopped working on his project to help him find it. Quintin asked Ms. Lots for help and moved to the library after receiving it. Mary and Kate came to Ms. Lots and received help on their projects. Shirley and Ken were working together on their projects. Shirley stopped and said, "I'm going to put in my earrings." (She used notebook rings to simulate earrings.) Joe stopped his work to hand her a ring and put a ring in his nose. "Hey Shirley, I'm a bull," he said. Ken looked up and saw the paper Joe was working on. "What are those dumb circles?," he asked. "That's my project," Joe answered. During this period of time Quintin had been helping Mary with her project in the library.

Statement #5 - Gifted pupils look forward to their special classes but sometimes feel penalized by their regular teachers for attending these classes.

Statement #6 - The greatest stimulation of gifted pupils occurs during stiuations that are challenging and creative, and activities that require thinking at higher levels.

Incident #14

On March 23 the fifth and sixth grade pupils burst into the enrichment room at 8:45 p.m. full of enthusiasm. Each began telling Ms. Lots and the

others rhyming riddles they had worked on at home. These had not been an assignment. Only when certain projects had to be built from materials at home were the gifted pupils asked to do "homework." They had been working on problems in rhyming riddles at their March 21 class and evidently spent considerable time since developing original rhymes. Several told of trying them on their parents or siblings and that their families had also made up some. After about ten minutes, Ms. Lots asked them to begin work on new projects. All but Joe (who worked in the enrichment room alone) went to the library to seek material.

Incident #15

Today Ms. Lots had arranged for the district's audiovisual director to videotape presentations of projects selected and developed by pupils from all the groups. The first group was the fifth and sixth grades. They arrived before the audiovisual person and all started to lay out their materials. When she arrived they "helped" her set up the equipment. Several pretended not to want to be videotaped. Karen said she didn't want to be taped, as she clowned in front of the camera. "I'll just do it from behind that other desk," she said pointing to the other desk in the library. But when Ms. Lots called her away to get instructions, she didn't want to leave the camera spot.

Ken had forgotten the salt for his experiment. He was sent to get some from the kitchen. All of the group clowned in front of the camera and alternately watched the others in the monitor. Then each gave their presentation while others watched and evaluated the presentations using a rating form the group had worked out earlier. About one-half hour later,

Ms. Lots said that they might come back during recess if they wanted to see the rerun of their presentations. But I (observer) commented, "It's a nice day. They'd rather go to recess!" The whole group looked at me in silence. Then I laughed and the whole group laughed. They all were there to see the rerun during recess.

Incident #16

The class was presented with a problem. They had to decide how to drop the last dinosaur egg off a cliff onto the seashore without breaking it so it could hatch. They were required to design a method of doing this (dropping the egg, not lowering it) without breaking it. They were told that in three weeks they would test their designs by having their eggs dropped off the roof of the school. The group was very enthusiastic. They brainstormed for the entire 1 1/4 hours, making diagrams and exploring wildly imaginative and most unworkable ways. (Note: Finally five of the nine pupils got their eggs down safely. The most successful way turned out to be some system of padding the egg in a container. One pupil used a parachute and a padded "Legs" carton. The most imaginative design was a glider to sail the egg down, but the glider crashed.)

Incident #17

Ms. Lots was absent on March 27th. On March 29th, Ken and Don burst into the enrichment room ahead of the rest of the group. "You owe us two days now!," they asserted. "OK," replied Ms. Lots. (Note: No substitutes are employed when Ms. Lots is absent. The pupils just stay in the regular classroom. She had made it a practice to attempt to make up such absences by using her free and office prep time and the pupils sometimes gave up

their recesses to attend these "make ups.") Quintin was chewing gum and Don snitched to Ms. Lots who ignored Don and the act. The rest of the group arrived. Jack was last to arrive and told Ms. Lots that she now "owed" them two days. "We've already told her," the rest of the group responded.

Data Analyses

A great number of the perceptions about gifted pupils noted in the literature were discovered in the behavior of gifted elementary pupils in this research. Pupils were indentified solely on the basis of intelligence by an intermediate unit psychologist. It took a major effort by the local district administration and the intermediate unit gifted teacher to establish a multidisciplinary method of identification and selection. The regular classroom teachers generally supported this multidisciplinary approach which relied heavily on the classroom teacher as one imput to that process. They did not, however, support the effort to recognize gifted pupils who had learning disabilities or were underachievers.

In the regular classroom, teachers would involve gifted pupils in discussion and social activities; but in the general activities (especially arithmetic), they simply accelerated the work in quantity and in grade level to some extent. This was accepted by the gifted pupils with considerable boredom but without complaint. Some worked hard to achieve As; others engaged in considerable daydreaming. Daydreaming was usually not a problem for either the teacher or the pupil. Only on the very occasional time when the gifted pupil might disturb the rest of the class did the classroom

teacher pay any attention to the gifted pupil who generally sat quietly at his/her desk, working or not.

In spite of this, gifted pupils did not generally object to the regular classroom work or their teachers. The only vocal objection was voiced for the pupil during an I.E.P. conference. Nor did the gifted pupils totally reject their less gifted classmates. In fact, they almost always selected some pupil other than a gifted pupil to be with. These friends were usually very bright but not classified as gifted. Perhaps the small number of gifted pupils in any one regular classroom accounts partly for this fact. Yet, the same was true regarding recess, lunch and free time. Gifted pupils did interact well with each other and were much more likely to offer to assist another gifted pupil in the enrichment class than to offer a classmate help in the regular classroom. This may be due to the generally more creative nature of the enrichment activities and that the enrichment teacher encouraged such cooperative work.

There is no doubt about the fact that gifted pupils enjoyed creative tasks and projects. They preferred to work on problems that permitted more than a single solution and would debate who's solution was better. They enjoyed showing other gifted pupils their solutions and each demanded a great deal of personal attention from the enrichment teacher while they were trying out solutions. Even in the enrichment room, where all tasks tended to be more creative, the gifted pupils enjoyed most the very unusual and open-ended problems.

Because of the fact that the gifted pupils enjoyed the enrichment activities and received a great deal of personal attention from the teacher, these pupils coveted their enrichment time. They freely gave up their

recess and free time to go to enrichment activities and demanded "makeup" classes when the enrichment class had to be canceled.

Gifted pupils were not rejected by other classmates, except for those few gifted underachievers. These underachieving gifted pupils were rejected by almost all in the school: regular pupils, gifted pupils, and regular teachers. While they received support and attention from the enrichment teacher and greatly enjoyed this class, they were generally not among that teacher's "favorite pupils." The plight of these pupils and the resultant loss to themselves and the society seems to be largely ignored and unexplored. Considerable research might focus on their identification and remedial programs (surely quite different than the usual remedial classroom activities).

Finally, the gifted elementary pupils studied in this research were not the physically superior in the school. While they were on the average perhaps some above the general average, they exhibited considerable variation in physical ability, size and strength and enthusiasm for physical activity, particularly if it involved contact. While some were physically strong, large and sought the center of physical activities, most did not. These data are somewhat in contradiction with the generally held assumption that the gifted are also bigger, stronger and more physically coordinated.

Conclusions

The following then comprise a restatement of the original statements modified and now accounting for the observations made in this research.

1. Gifted pupils tend to be isolated from many regular classroom activities
   a. They spent considerable time (more than normal pupils) doing repetitive work (i.e., math problems) while the rest of the class is being taught.
2. Gifted pupils seldom volunteered or were asked to assist other pupils in the regular classroom setting.
3. Most often when gifted pupils interacted with others in the regular classroom setting, it is a competitive activity and the gifted pupils are recognized as "special" and pitted against each other.
4. Gifted pupils do not choose other gifted pupils as "closest" friend in the school setting. Rather they tend to choose one other pupil (of the same sex) who is bright but just below the gifted category.
5. Gifted pupils do not attempt to monopolize the time of the regular classroom teacher and seem resigned to their role of being rather isolated from the regular activities.
6. Some gifted pupils have apparent learning difficulties (sloppy written work or unwillingness to complete assignments). This tends to be true in enrichment as well as regular class activities. These pupils are generally disliked by both gifted and regular pupils.
7. Other gifted pupils are competitive and almost compulsive about achieving. This is accepted by both gifted and regular pupils as well as teachers in general. These pupils, although not best liked, were accepted.
8. Gifted pupils, in general, are very sharing, interactive, and communicative with other pupils in their enrichment classes in distinct contrast to their behavior in regular classrooms.

9. Gifted pupils are very demanding of and competitive for the time of the enrichment teacher. They constantly seek her approval and help (and got it) in contrast to their behavior in regular classrooms.
10. Gifted pupils value and prize their time in the enrichment class, and volunteer to give up recess to "make up" missed sessions and "demanding" such time when regular school activities intervene on their regularly scheduled enrichment class.

FOOTNOTES

1. Here the term "Ethnographic Study" is used to refer to the concept of "thick description" as used by Geertz. It does not refer to ethnography as the description and story of a single person or an environment. Instead it shifts from classroom to classroom and from group to group in the enrichment class in a single school. It does not describe the continuous process of one pupil or class but the representative behaviors of all pupils, identified as gifted, in one elementary school.

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